

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 104460
ORIGIN OES-07

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NOAA/NMFS:PJENSEN (PHONE)
-----044044 242309Z /66

O 242252Z APR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 104460

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIS, SENV, IWC-1, OCLR

SUBJECT: OVERFLIGHT CLEARANCE FOR USG AIRCRAFT

1. IN RESPONSE TO RECENT ACTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION (IWC) CONCERNING HUNT FOR BOWHEAD WHALES BY ALASKAN ESKIMOS, USG HAS DEVELOPED EXTENSIVE RESEARCH PLAN. DR. I. NIKONOROV, DIRECTOR, GLAVRYBVOD MINISTRY OF FISHERIES, SOVIET IWC COMMISSIONER, HAS A COPY OF RESEARCH PLAN AS IT WAS PRESENTED TO IWC AT SPECIAL MEETING IN TOKYO, DECEMBER 1977. DR. V. A. ZEMSKY, CHIEF MARINE MAMMAL LABORATORY, VNIRO, MOSCOW, IS PARTICIPATING IN RESEARCH PROGRAM IN ALASKA. AERIAL SURVEYS ARE IMPORTANT PART OF RESEARCH TO DETERMINE MORE ACCURATELY THE SIZE OF THE BOWHEAD WHALE POPULATION. ESKIMOS CLAIM THAT PAST SURVEYS HAVE CONCENTRATED ON WHALES MIGRATING NORTH CLOSE TO U.S. COAST, THEREBY MISSING MANY WHALES THAT MIGRATE FARTHER FROM SHORE AND POSSIBLY EVEN FAIRLY CLOSE
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TO USSR COAST. NOAA WOULD THEREFORE LIKE TO UNDERTAKE AERIAL SURVEYS CLOSE TO USSR COAST FIRST TO DETERMINE IF LEAD STRUCTURE IN ICE IS SUCH THAT WHALES LIKELY TO MIGRATE THROUGH THEM AND IF SO, THEN TO TRY TO DETERMINE NUMBER OF WHALES INVOLVED. PHOTOGRAPHS WILL BE TAKEN ONLY OVER THE WATER. IT IS EXPECTED DR. ZEMSKY WILL PARTICIPATE IN AERIAL SURVEYS.

2.A.PLANE IS TWIN ENGINE TURBOPROP GRUMMAN GOOSE,
REGISTRY NO. N780, OWNED BY DEPT OF INTERIOR, FISH AND
WILDLIFE SERVICE.

B. PLANE HAS GLOBAL NAVIGATION SYSTEM 500 ONBOARD.

C. PLANE IS BASED IN NOME, ALASKA.

D. FLIGHTS WOULD TAKE PLACE WITHIN 66°N-67°N, 169°W TO
USSR COAST. MORE SPECIFICALLY ROUTE WOULD BE FROM NOME
TO 66°30'N, 169°W; WEST ALONG 66°30'N TOWARD USSR UNTIL
OPEN LEADS IN ICE ARE REACHED (ESTIMATED 3-10 MILES
OFFSHORE); THEN FOLLOW LEADS NORTH TO 67°N; THEN RETURN
TO NOME.

E. WOULD LIKE TO MAKE TWO FLIGHTS DURING MAY 2-4, ONE
FLIGHT DURING MAY 8-10, SPECIFIC TIME BEING DEPENDENT
ON WEATHER AND OTHER RESEARCH PLANS.

F. CAPTAIN WILL BE EITHER HERMAN RUESS OR TOM BELLAU,
COPILOT WILL BE JOHN SASSO. SCIENTIST IN CHARGE IS DR.
STEVE LEATHERWOOD. REST OF CREW WILL BE THREE OTHER
USG SCIENTISTS AND DR. ZEMSKY.

G. PURPOSE OF FLIGHTS IS TO INCREASE ACCURACY OF
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ESTIMATE OF TOTAL BOWHEAD WHALE POPULATION BY DETERMINING
HOW MANY WHALES, IF ANY, ARE MIGRATING CLOSE TO USSR
COAST. INFORMATION WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO SCIENTIFIC
COMMITTEE OF THE IWC. CAMERA USED IS 35 MM HANDHELD
CAMERA. PLANE USUALLY FLIES AT 500-1000 FEET WHILE
PHOTOGRAPHING WHALES. RPT PHOTOGRAPHS WILL BE TAKEN
ONLY OVER WATER.

3. ACTION: REQUEST EMBASSY OBTAIN OVERFLIGHT CLEARANCE
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND NOTIFY OES/OFA BY IMMEDIATE
CABLE. VANCE

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NNN

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